DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 133 894 EA 009 153

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TITLE Development and Implementation of a New Attendance Policy at Napa High School.
PUB DATE Sep 76
NOTE 83p.; Introductory Practicum submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the National Ed.D. Program for Educational Leaders, Nova University

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$4.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Attendance; Attendance Patterns; Elementary Secondary Education; Parent School Relationship; Program Evaluation; *School Policy; *Truancy
IDENTIFIERS *Napa High School (California)

ABSTRACT

The attendance policy outlined in this document succeeded in increasing attendance in Napa High School, California. The program focused on student absences due to truancy, not illness, although many of the illness absences reported were due to other, not-so-legitimate causes. The attendance program utilized a direct relationship between the earning of credit and the student's attendance. Communication between parents and the school was emphasized. Evaluation of the program indicated that while students were less than satisfied with the policy, parents and faculty members were generally favorably disposed to it. The program resulted in about a 4.6 percent absentee rate for the spring semester, 1976. (Author/DS)

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ED133894

DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A NEW ATTENDANCE POLICY AT NAPA HIGH SCHOOL

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the National Ed. D. Program for Educational Leaders, Nova University.

Introductory Practicum
San Francisco Bay Cluster
Submitted: September 10, 1976

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EA 009 153

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GENERAL STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM..... pg. 3

Existence of the Problem..... pg. 3
The Attendance Problem at Napa High..... pg. 4
Clarification of the Attendance Problem..... pg. 6
The Real Problem..... pg.10

GOALS & OBJECTIVES TO ATTEMPT TO SOLVE PROBLEM..... pg.11

Philosophy..... pg.11
Goals & Supportive Objectives..... pg.11

STRATEGY UTILIZED TO MEET GOALS & OBJECTIVES..... pg.14

Development of the New Attendance Policy..... pg.14
Making the School Community Aware of Policy..... pg.17
Strategy to Meet Other Objectives..... pg.19

PROCEDURE UTILIZED IN SOLVING PROBLEM..... pg.21

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PRACTICUM..... pg.24

The General Evaluation Design..... pg.24
An Assessment of the Statistical Data..... pg.25
Comparison of Weekly Attendance Report..... pg.27
Comparison ot Total full Days Student Absent..... pg.30
Attendance Policy Evaluation Surveys..... pg.32
The Overall Evaluation..... pg.41

INSTITUTIONALIZING THE OUTCOMES..... pg.47

RESOURCES USED IN PRACTICUM..... pg.48

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS..... pg.51

BIBLIOGRAPHY..... pg.56

APPENDICES..... pg.57

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure #1.....Needs Assessment Absentee Rate..... pg. 6

Figure #2.....Attendance Pilot Policy..... pg.15

Figure #3.....Comparison Non-Ill Absences with Control School... pg.26

Figure #4.....Comparison Weekly Attendance Report..... pg.28

Figure #5.....Line Graph of Absentee Data..... pg.31

Figure #6.....Bar Graph of Full Day Absences..... pg.33

Figure #7.....Results Faculty Questionnaire..... pg.34

Figure #8.....Results Parents Questionnaire..... pg.37

Figure #9.....Results Students Questionnaire..... pg.39

Appendix #1.....Compulsory Attendance Law for California..... pg.57

Appendix #2.....Parents Letter to Introduce New Policy..... pg.58

Appendix #3.....Form Letter Sent Home to Parents..... pg.60

Appendix #4.....Faculty Comments from Questionnaire..... pg.61

Appendix #5.....Parents Comments from Questionnaire..... pg.71

Appendix #6.....Students Comments from Questionnaire..... pg.75

GENERAL STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Existence of the Problem

Throughout the country, student absenteeism continues to be a serious problem for the secondary schools. In 1973, and again in 1974, National Association of Secondary Schools Principals members rated poor attendance as their "most perplexing student peoblem." These ratings come from Secondary Principals NASSP'S annual poll of its members on school organization and curriculum.[1] The P.T.A., at its National Convention in January, 1976, listed the problem of absenteeism as its number one problem of concern, as well, in the United States schools.[2]

Teachers, counselors, and administrators are spending increased time just to manage the attendance situation, less opportunity remains for more constructive tasks. The quality of teaching, counseling, and administering can easily be affected by excessive attendance patterns.

In 1976 nearly 90% of America's teenagers are enrolled in high schools across this land. This certainly is drastically differenc than 70% of the adolescent population in the early 1900's, that was served by the American high school.[3] With this great increase in percentage of enrollees in our schools has also come an increase in

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[1] J. Levanto, "High School Absenteeism" National Association of Secondary School Principal's Bulletin, (October 1975) p.100.

[2] "Attendance is the Biggest Problem" San Francisco Chronicle, January 22, 1976, Section A, p. 2.

[3] U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, The Condition of Education, March 1976, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office. March 1, 1976), p. 178.

attendance problems. Even though there are a few schools still in the country that experience a low 5% absentee rate, there are many urban schools that experience over 20% of their students not in attendance during an average day.[4] Napa High School, in Napa, California, isn't yet facing the gigantic problems in attendance that the urban schools are, but never the less, we were averaging approximately 9% absenteeism before the implementation of our new attendance policy.

What causes students to miss school? Contributing to poor attendance may be family attitudes, social forces, peer pressures, economic circumstances, home-school relationships, student age and health. While absenteeism can be a symptom of an inadequate curriculum, an analysis reveals that maybe this is only one of the many causes. Numerous schools with broad and flexible programs continue to face severe attendance problems. Napa High has a very broad, diversified curriculum to offer students. Obviously, growing absenteeism has deep roots leading in many directions. The causes are personal as well as institutional.

Attendance in school is such an important item that many states have passed legislation regarding compulsory attendance. California is no exception. Students' attendance is required by law. (Please see appendix #1 for compulsory attendance and truancy laws of the state of California.)

The Attendance Problem at Napa High

Napa High School, a three grade (10, 11, & 12) high school in the

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[4]Dick Davis, "One Solution to the Inner City Attendance Problem", Phi Delta Kappan, April, 1975, p.506.

Napa Valley Unified School District, is located in Napa, California. This highly WASP bedroom community is approximately 50 miles from the heart of the San Francisco Bay Area. If one took the social economic parameters of low middle to upper middle class, you would include 95% of the population of the school district. The minority population of the N.V.U.S.D. is 6% out of 15,000 students. Mexican-American and Orientals would lead the minority lists. There are two high schools in the district and three junior highs. Napa High's enrollment started at 1643 in September and ended at 1474 in June.

The faculty at Napa High during the spring of 1975 started expressing concern regarding the absenteeism of their students. During the fall of 1975, this concern became crystalized even more when the faculty, in October, generated a list of reasons why attendance effects their programs:

1. Lowering teacher efficiency by necessitating much repitition in explanation of subject matter for returning absentees.
2. Lessening of the effectiveness of the examination as a learning instrument, since results often can't be discussed until absentees have made up the test.
3. Lowering student morale, since many students receive the same number of credits for far less time in class.
4. Increasing teacher frustration because many types of classroom work, such as lectures, films, panels, and class discussions cannot be made up.
5. Lowering of educational standards, as work tends to be geared to the rate of absenteeism.
6. Wasting of valuable class time with traditional attendance practices which are not effective.

The Napa High faculty had determined that a school cannot teach pupils who are not present. The entire process of education requires a regular continuity of instruction, classroom participation, learning experiences and study in order to reach the goal of maximum educational benefits for each individual child. The regular contact of the pupils with one another in the classroom and their participation

in well-planned instructional activity under the tutelage of a competent teacher are vital to this purpose. This is the well-established principle of education which underlies and gives purpose to the requirement of compulsory schooling in California and other states in the nation.

The attendance problem at Napa High had come to the surface in the eyes of the faculty. In order to statistically get a "handle" on how bad our attendance problem was, our attendance files were utilized to pick eight days at random to determine our absentee rate during the previous 1974-75 school year. (Please see figure #1 for the data.) The rate of absenteeism fit between the parameters of 1.9% (a day final exams were given) and 11.8%, with an average of 9.1%. The non-ill percentages ranged from a high of 2.5% to a low of .2%, with an average of 1.8%.

Figure #1

Date 1974-75	Enrollment	Total Student Absent	Non-ill Absent	Total absent Percent	Non-ill Percent
Oct. 8 (Tues.)	1651	149	33	9.1%	2.0%
Nov. 13 (Wed.)	1639	145	31	8.7%	1.9%
Nov. 29 (Wed.)	1630	184	39	11.2%	2.4%
Dec. 9 (Mon.)	1629	194	40	11.8%	2.5%
Dec. 19 (Thurs.)	1622	191	36	11.8%	2.2%
Jan. 11 (Fri.)	1611	149	29	9.2%	1.8%
Jan. 23 (Wed.)	1604	127	29	7.9%	1.8%
*Jan. 31 (Thur.)	1601	31	3	1.9%	.2%

*During final week

Clarification of the Attendance Problem at Napa High

The data gathered had shown an absentee rate at Napa High at 9.1%. Could this be improved on? Are Napa High kids attending school as much as they should? These were questions still unanswered. Sure, the administration and faculty knew there were students who stayed away

from school for numerous reasons: sickness, vacations, needed at home, trips to San Francisco with parents, doctors and dentists appointments, etc. But what amount of time should a student be legitimately out of school?

Using a school year of 180 days, National Health Officials of Health, Education & Welfare (H.E.W.) estimate that a "normal" absentee rate for legitimate illness would be seven to nine days for each student. Translated into percentages, the expected rate would be four to five percent per year. (Students who would exceed this rate because of long-term illness would amount to less than one percent per year of the total enrollment.)[5] The national norm figures could only serve as guidelires. Each school in the country is different. But nothing could be found to support the concept that Napa was not a "normal community". Napa is a middle class community and has no known health detractors.

What H.E.W. was saying, is a normal student in an average school would miss no more than five days of school a semseter due to health reasons. If the student misses more than five days, he/she is absent for other reasons than illenss. Even though their excuse note might state illness on it.

Again, the attendance files were utilized to find the number of students who missed more than five days a semseter (health standards would be five or less days a semester).

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[5]U.S. National Center for Educational Statistics, U.S. Department of Health, Education & Welfare, cited in the National Association of Secondary School Principals, The Practitioner, March, 1975, p. 1.

TOTAL FULL DAYS STUDENTS ABSENT FALL SEMESTER 1974-75

Days Absent	0-5	6-7	8-12	13 or more
Number of Students	611	159	283	546

A little more than one-third (611) of our student body stayed within the health guidelines. The other two-thirds (988) are absent more than five days, which indicates absenteeism caused by other reasons than health.

H.E.W.'s statistics were somewhat of an aid in helping to establish a general target population of students. Those students who were missing school more often than just those days they were sick, could show an attendance improvement with a motivational kind of policy. The real purpose of this practicum was to show an improved rate of attendance by our student body. The major information that the national norms gave, was 611 (38%) of our student body probably couldn't improve much more (health will not allow them to). But 62% of our students maybe could be motivated to have better attendance. This norm concept helped establish a realization for a need for improvement of attendance and generally how large a group we could be dealing with. No one with certainty could predict which individual students would actually improve their attendance during the semester. But at least there was a rough idea that approximately 60% of our students could improve, if this practitioner had all types of motivation at his disposal.

Utilizing H.E.W.'s guidelines and looking at the random data in figure #1, it was obvious there were large amounts of students whose excuses stated illness, but in reality they were not ill. (Compare total absent percentage with non-ill percentage.) This difference was found to be as great as 4%. (11.8% - 2.5% = 9.3% - 5% [health standards]

= 4%) The major reason this condition exists, is the system parents and students are subjected to in California schools. The law allows the school to collect state money on students that are out of school for sickness, only. School districts from the time that students enter 1st grade, via principals, teachers, nurses, etc. encourage "illness" type of excuse notes. The "game" is played this way in California. It is the unwritten rule. In many conversations with students and parents over the years in my office and out on the campus, it is indicated that young people are out of school for reasons other than illness. Illness is the excuse on their notes; however, one would have to run a major interrogation to get true statistical valid data, in this regard. I doubt that there is an educator in California that wouldn't support this conclusion as being a logical one. Our attendance office finds 10-12 notes a week forged by students, claiming illness, that parents will prove to be different, when called.

The attendance problem at Napa High was thus a complex one. Students' attendance is required by law; however, in the Napa Valley Unified School District (as in many other parts of the state) these laws are administered in a very lax fashion. How does one sort out the legitimate ill notes from those that are forged or falsified by parents? Enforcement of the attendance laws at Napa High had consisted of sending the student to the continuation high school when he/she had missed a tremendous amount of school, usually for "non-illness" reasons. Students, parents, teachers, and administrators never seem to know what the policies were. The Dean of Boys and the Dean of Girls "flew by the seat of their pants" and tried to be as fair as possible in administrating the field of attendance. Seventy-five students were

transferred from Napa High during the 1974-75 school year to the continuation high school because of too high a rate of absenteeism. (Usually more than 20 days a semester non-ill.) Therefore, those students who did the best jobs of forgeries or had their parents falsify the notes probably had the best chance of staying at Napa High.

The Real Problem

The problem was starting to be identified. There were approximately 1,000 students at Napa High who could be in school more than they were. It would be much wiser to look at this number, which was computed from normal health standards, than to just utilize the data from the attendance office because this only showed at the most 2.5% absenteeism beyond illness (using data figure #1). Our target population would have been very small if that approach was used.

The faculty was well aware that the great growth of students being absent from school centered around an erosion of parental control, economic affluence, novel lifestyles, and a breakdown in court enforcement of attendance laws. Any policy that was going to motivate students to be in school must deal with these social problems as well. The problem became one that centered around the nearly 1,000 students at Napa High who could show attendance gains if properly motivated. Certainly one could not expect all 1,000 students to show attendance gains. In addition to illness, students will be absent for funerals, weddings, family vacations, etc. These social pressures are hard to combat. Being as realistic as possible, the work on the motivational policy began.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES TO ATTEMPT TO SOLVE PROBLEM

Philosophy

The main premise for conceptualizing a solution to the attendance problem at Napa High, is that when little or nothing is done about attendance, the problem gets worse. If a school is going to make any headway on attendance, it must establish policies that clearly specify to students and parents attendance expectations and delineate the outcomes of good and poor attendance. Certainly the old Napa High program of judging each case separately was not motivating several members of our student body.

Even though the policy that was developed could be labeled by some as punitive in nature, it shifted more of the responsibility for attendance to the student and parent. Now the earning of credit became directly contingent on the student's regular attendance, assuming satisfactory completion of the class work.

The philosophy utilized during this practicum centered around the concept of motivation. Many students do not know what is expected of them until the instructions are clearly stated. There was little doubt in any of the students' minds, the Napa High faculty wanted them to be in school after implementation of our new policy.

Goals and Supportive Objectives That Were Strived For

The practitioner established the following goals and supportive objectives from which an attendance policy would be developed:

I. To decrease significantly absenteeism at Napa High of those students (approximately 1,000) who are beyond the "normal" health factor of five days a semester plus other legitimate absences.

A. Create a new attendance policy that is operational and administrable. (Process)

B. Place more responsibility for attendance on the student and parent. (Process)

C. Make the earning of credit directly contingent on the student's regular attendance. (Process)

D. Determine the number of students who had severe attendance problems who were motivated by new policy to attend school. (Product)

E. Determine the number of students whose attendance didn't improve because of new policy. (Product)

F. Develop a more positive attitude of the target population toward good attendance practices. (Terminal)

II. Increase the educational experiences of the students at Napa High, which will result in a greater amount of learning.

A. Students (target population) will be in class more often to take advantage of learning opportunities. (Process)

B. More subject matter will be covered in the average class because of decrease in make-up and review time for absent students. (Terminal)

C. Expose the target population students to the concept of being a dependable responsible citizen tends to include consistent regular attendance. (Process)

III. Increase faculty morale through a consistently administered approach to attendance problems.

A. Invite teachers to be a part of the needs assessment process, policy determination, implementation, and the evaluation process. (Process)

B. A definite policy will be created that will allow for consistent administration by teachers and deans. (Product)

C. Lower teacher frustration, because many of the target population will not be missing classroom work such as lectures, films, panels, and class discussions, which are difficult to make up. (Product)

D. Improved spree de corp of the faculty, which will be working together to solve a common problem. (Terminal)

IV. Increase communication between the school and the parents.

A. In making the parents aware of the new created policy, a

deeper understanding for the need for their children to be in school will be established. (Process)

B. Make the P.T.A. and other parent groups a part of the policy design team. (Process)

C. Communication will take place directly to the home of students in the target population via letter or phone. (Process)

D. Provide opportunities of parent, student, faculty conferences regarding mutual attendance problems. (Process)

E. Increase rapport between school and parents based upon the premise that the schools are willing to work on the attendance problem. (Product)

V. Increase financial support for the district because of increase A.D.A.

A. Reduce non-ill absences to increase allowable A.D.A. Each student who misses school with a non-ill excuse cost the district approximately $6.00 per day. (Terminal)

STRATEGY UTILIZED TO MEET GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Development of the New Attendance Policy

A great amount of input was received during the months of September and October from students, faculty and parents regarding the attendance problem. Any attendance program that has any teeth to motivate students to be in school will cause an impact. This impact will be felt by all those concerned with the education of the youngster. To derive a program without consultation and input from all groups, would have led to a disaster. Recommendations, ideas and opinions were solicited by the practitioner at P.T.A., faculty, and student body meetings. The goals and the supportive objectives were the results of these two months of input. The formal body that was most instrumental as giving direct recommendation to the goal setting process was the attendance problem study committee, made up of six teachers, two administrators and four students. Meeting on a weekly basis for eight weeks (one hour meetings), brainstorming techniques were utilized to establish some feeling for the problem and possible solutions.

This same committee, upon receiving input from our peers, developed the Napa High School Attendance Procedure Policy during the month of November, 1975. The procedure policy was to be the vehicle to cause the motivation of the target population in order that the goals and objectives created could be met. The first rough draft written by the committee in early November was taken to a faculty meeting on November 13, 1975. The entire Napa High faculty (91) reviewed the rough draft and made recommendations for consideration by the committee.

(Napa High faculty of 91 includes nine teachers who are paid by Napa County but teach vocational programs on our campus.)

Likewise, the rough draft was taken to a general P.T.A. membership meeting on November 18, 1975, to be scrutinized by the 200 parents in attendance.

Finally, the last input on the rough draft was received from the student leaders at the Napa High Forum meeting on November 24th. This elected body of 85 students spent over an hour evaluating the document and suggesting changes.

On December 3, 1975, the attendance committee met to rewrite the proposal based on input from the three groups. The more polished document was then taken to the central office to be reviewed by the educational leaders of the N.V.U.S.D. Withstanding this test on December 9, 1975, the policy went to the school board for approval as a pilot project on December 18, 1975. (Please see figure #2 for Pilot Policy 343.1.)

Figure #2

Pilot Policy 343.1

NAPA VALLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

NAPA HIGH SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

1. This policy designates twelve (12) days absence per semester as maximum allowed for normal circumstances of regular school attendance. The twelve (12) days of absence are to accomodate:

   a. Personal illness
   b. Professional appointments that could not be scheduled outside the regular school day
   c. Serious personal or family problems

   Thirteen or more absences during a semester can jeopardize a student's enrollment status.

2. After the fourth (4), eighth (8), and twelfth (12) absences from any class period, the teacher of that class will complete a form indicating the dates of student absences. This form will be mailed home by the attendance office and copies issued to appropriate staff members.[1] The student shall be counseled by the teacher at the fourth (4) absence. The teacher and counselor/administrator shall counsel the student following the eighth (8) and twelfth (12) absences. A personal[2] school contact will be made with the parent immediately following the 9th day of absence. The parent will be encouraged to initiate a conference with the teacher to clarify absenteeism and any questions which may be raised. Chronic illness and other extenuating circumstances will be considered in extending the limit of allowed absences.

3. With the accumulation of thirteen (13) absences during the semester for any class period, the student risks forfeiture of course credit in that class and can be dropped from class enrollment. Parents will be notified.

4. A review by the Napa High School Attendance Review Board (NHSARB) consisting of representation from administration, counseling and faculty may be requested by the student, teacher, parent, or counselor to examine the specific conditions relating to the individual case any time prior to dropping from class. The NHSARB may extend the absence limit, continue the student's enrollment in the class(es) on a probationary basis or take such action as is indicated. The parent will be promptly informed in writing of the results of such hearing.

5. School-sponsored or sanctioned activities for which the student has been properly pre-excused are exempted from, and will not pertain to this policy.

6. Disciplinary suspension days will be included in the total days absent.

7. Tardiness is defined as any unexcused appearance of a student beyond the scheduled time that a class begins. Three (3) incidents of unexcused tardies to a class will be considered as equal to one (1) absence. Tardiness of 20 minutes or more to a class may, at the descretion of the teacher, be considered an absence. The teacher shall notify the student when such incidents are recorded as absences.

8. Students must maintain a minimum enrollment in four courses to continue as a regular student; one study hall permitted. Students' enrollment shall be dropped when the minimum of four classes is not maintained.

9. It is extremely important that students realize that the twelve (12) days of absences built into the attendance policy are not to be considered as authorized days for absences but for illness and emergencies.

10. A School Attendance Advisory Committee consisting of administration, faculty, and students will periodically evaluate this policy in an effort to maintain guidelines that reflect the school's educational philosophy and contribute to the welfare of the students.

Footnotes:

1. Copies to Counselor, Attendance office, teacher.

2. Teacher contacts parent by phone; if not successful, refer to counselor for follow-up. This contact at end of 8th day is most important. It does assure the home is aware and also allows time to make any adjustments to overcome difficulties. It provides the resources of the school working with the home, cooperatively, to offer assistance to the student.

Making the school Community Aware of Policy

With the school board's approval of the new attendance policy on December 9, the next step became one of preparing the school community for its implementation. Communication became the orders of the day; during Christmas vacation of 1975, the administrative staff at Napa High prepared our mid year newsletter that is mailed to the home of every parent/guardian of each of our students. In part of this newsletter was an explanation of our new attendance policy. We tried to delineate the mechanics and purpose of our new motivation program. (Please see appendix #2.) It was a sincere attempt to inform the general parents and hopefully get their support from the beginning.

The most important group that needed to know the "nuts & bolts" of the new attendance program was the students themselves. On January 7, 1976, a series of period by period assemblies were conducted for this purpose. In California, every student must take physical education all three years of senior high school. The attendance committee utilized the students' P.E. period for this special 52 minute assembly. Having 1,550 students in a six period day generated group sizes of approximately 250 students per period. Utilizing our lecture

hall, which seats 262, as the meeting site, copies of the policy were passed out to each student. The practitioner, Chris Hodgekins, our A.S.B. president, available members of the faculty-student attendance committee, discussed with the students the purpose and mechanics of the new attendance program that was going to go into effect the second semester, starting February 2, 1976. A very positive approach was used to convey the message of the value in this program of helping the student. The practitioner tried to utilize our student leaders that were serving on the committee, to speak as much as possible to their colleagues. This technique seemed to reduce some of the anxiety of "what are you laying on me now?". Ample time was given to the answering of questions from the students during all six periods.

At the conclusion of the day, it was obvious a few of the students had concern this program was going to "hurt" some of their colleagues. Even though in the assembly, it was mentioned many times, any situation beyond the control of the student would be reviewed and extention of time given. A few students feared that illness was going to throw them or their friends out of school. The majority of the students took the information in stride and left the assembly to return to the business of education.

During the fall, at the committee meetings, much attention had been given to the mechanics of the new attendance policy. Many of the procedures are outlined in the policy itself. (Please see figure #2.) However, to make sure our entire staff was aware of the format, a special faculty meeting was held January 20, 1976, after school in the lecture hall. The steps that the teacher would go through were delineated and explained. Special attention was given to the form that they

would utilize on the fourth, eighth and twelfth absence from their class by a student. A special form had been developed by the attendance committee and the administrative staff in December after the board had given us approval to move ahead. The form had been developed to originate from the teacher's desk with copies to the parents, student's counselor and Deans. (Please see appendix #3 for copy of the form.)

Strategy to Meet Other Objectives

In the development of the new attendance policy, which certainly places more responsibility for attendance on the student and the earning of credit directly contingent on the student's attendance, the strategy for Goal #1 and objectives A, B, & C had been undertaken.

The meetings with parents and the special newsletter sent home had done a great deal to start meeting Goal #4 and some of its objectives. But so far very little had been done to set the stage for the other goals the practitioner wanted to see accomplished during this practicum.

During the special faculty meeting in January, the practitioner discussed in great detail the need to assess the amount of learning taking place in the classroom during this pilot program. Each teacher was made aware that in their professional judgement, an evaluation of the subject matter covered and the students' success in relationship to previous semesters would be expected procedure. This concept of looking for learning growth (or lack of it) during the spring semester of 1976, was communicated at all opportunities: department meetings, department head's meetings, individual teacher contacts, etc. The ground work had been laid to strive for Goal #2, increase the educational experiences of the students at Napa High, which will result in

greater amount of learning.

The faculty, via the attendance committee, and special faculty meetings, had been involved in the development and planning of the new policy. The strategy for accomplishing Goal #3 was well on its way. The faculty was 97.8% (two teachers voted against it) supportive of the new program before its implementation in February. There was generated a good "spree de corp" of the faculty as we worked on a common problem. Napa High has a very strong staff, but certainly one that has divergent views on most educational topics. To see all but two teachers support the policy before its implementation into our school, gave a tremendous amount of hope to the practitioner regarding the success of this practicum.

PROCEDURE UTILIZED IN SOLVING PROBLEM

The date of February 2, 1976, arrived, and with it the kick-off of the new attendance policy. A great deal of time had been spent first semester in determining the problem, developing goals and objectives that supported our needs assessment, the development of the "instrument" (the attendance policy) that was, in theory, going to attack our problem. The implementation of the new pilot attendance policy had begun.

Each teacher was given a stack of attendance forms, clean sheets for the attendance/grade book and we opened up the spring semester of 1975-76 school year.

Attendance at Napa High is taken each period of the six period day. The teacher proceeds to mark in their attendance/grade book the proper symbol for any student late or absent. Absences are broken down into absences for school activity, absences for illness or medical, absences for non-ill. Attendance slips are picked up each period, every school day, from the teacher, by aids from the attendance office. The names of students who are absent are listed on the slip by the teacher. (Students with pre-excused recognized school activities would not be turned in.) This method of attendance has been utilized since 1972 when the "new" Napa High opened.

When a student in a class reached the fourth absence, the teacher filled out an attendance form (appendix #3) and routed it to the attendance office. The attendance secretary sent the white copy home to the parents/guardians, canary copy to the student's counselor and the pink copy to the proper Dean. The teacher kept the goldenrod copy for his/her records.

This attendance report was mailed home first class mail with an invitation to the parents to call the school regarding this lack of attendance of the youngster. As much as time permits, the counselors called in the student to discuss their attendance difficulties as well as phoning the parents.

The matter becomes much more serious when the student reached the eighth day absent and our staff reacted with more intensity. The teacher attempted to call the parent directly as well as the attendance form going home via the mail. If the teacher didn't reach the parent (indicated on form if successful) the counselor had a definite responsibility to call and discuss the matter with the parent. Many times a parent - counselor - student conference was set up. The teacher took every opportunity to discuss the attendance problem with his/her student in the classroom as well. By counselor and teacher, those students who had missed many of these eight days because of non-illness, were referred to either the Dean of Boys or Dean of Girls. In many cases the parents were asked to come in or phone calls were made to the home from the Deans. A message of the importance or attendance at Napa High was projected to student and parents alike.

Upon reaching the twelfth absence from any class, all resources at our staff's disposal were utilized to prevent the student from hitting the dangerous thirteenth absence. The attendance note was sent home, the teacher tried to call and the Dean had to make personal contact with the home. If the district psychologist, attendance and welfare specialist had to be called in, they were. Conferences of Deans, counselors, teacher(s), parents and student were utilized as much as possible to turn the situation around before the thirteenth day.

At anytime up to and including the thirteenth day, the student, his parents, teacher or counselor request a review of the circumstances that led to the amount of absences accumulated. This review was done by the Napa High School Attendance Review Board, consisting of representation from administration, counseling and faculty. Data from medical sources, input from parents, students, counselor and teachers was taken under advisement. The Review Board could extend the limit of absences beyond thirteen, allow the student to continue in his/her class(es) on a probationary basis or take whatever action that was fair and appropriate. The parent was notified as soon as possible in writing regarding the results of the review.

The afore mentioned procedure was utilized the entire spring semester, 1976, at Napa High. At the end of the third quarter on April 9, the progress report cards carried the number of days the student had missed in each of his/her classes. A computer program had been developed by the district's data processing specialist, that allows the teachers to bubble in, on the I.B.M. card, the number of days the student had missed, after nine weeks into the 18 week semester. This was additional input to the home of the student's attendance.

The procedure that was utilized to attempt to solve the problem of attendance generated a tremendous amount of communication amongst the students, parents, and the school. Attendance became a common word in the school community.

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PRACTICUM

The General Evaluation Design

The evaluation design of this practicum was structured to give an assessment of the major goals and objectives stated. The design utilized a scientific approach, dealing with attendance data whenever feasible. However, many of the goals and objectives had to be evaluated by the subjective opinions of our professional staff, students and parents.

Data was obtained from the spring semester, 1975, to establish a reference point. This expost facto control group would be compared against the data obtained from this past semester.

To insure validity of comparitive data, an equivalent control group was the student body of Vintage High School in the same district. The schools are approximately the same size, draw from same social-economic strata and have had comparable absenteeism the past three years. Both schools have been utilizing the same attendance policy and procedures. (However, there are different administrative staffs at each of the two schools. Human differences were an uncontrollable variable.) Vintage did continue with the old attendance program while Napa High implemented its program in February, 1976. A comparison between target population and control groups was made during the months of February - June after implementation of the treatment. Using two control groups did aid in the validity of the evaluation design.

The evaluation of the concept, that increased attendance did improve the education taking place at Napa High, is not as statistically sound as comparing days absent. However, via analysis of the numerous

surveys of parents, students, and faculty, good data did surface.

In the evaluation of goals two through five, the expost facto control group approach was used. No comparison study was made of Vintage in these areas because of the chance of "low creditability" data. It would be very difficult to get accurate survey information from your rival school. The data from the state audited attendance files was a different case completely. It had extremely high validity and creditability.

An evaluation is a judgement of the worth, or merit, or something.[6] The practicum was also evaluated on how well its design brought about greater attendance and the inductive conclusion of an improved learning environment with educational gains.

An Assessment of the Statistical Data (Napa High and the Control School)

As mentioned in the evaluation design, Vintage High School would be utilized as a control school. Data was collected for the non-ill students at both Napa High and Vintage High for the months of February through June for the years 1975 and 1976. (Please see figure #3.) The importance of using the 1975 data was to establish a base line. If you compare the totals of non-ill absences for 1975 you will find that Vintage has 2660 to Napa's 2171, but Vintage High is approximately 300 students or 20% larger. If Napa was as large at Vintage, [illegible] a simple proportion formula, to make it so, Napa would have had 2605 non-ill absences in 1975. Thus the two schools were very close in actuality (theoretically making them the same size) Vintage 2660 -

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[6]Michael Scriven, Evaluation (Fort Lauderdale: Nova University, 1974) p.p. 22-23

Napa 2605.

Figure #3

COMPARISON NON-ILL ABSENCES WITH CONTROL SCHOOL

Napa High

Month	Enrollment 1975	Non-ill Absences	Enrollment 1976	Non-ill Absences
Feb.	1523	579	1553	291
Mar.	1510	541	1545	328
Apr.	1483	453	1505	247
May	1455	467	1486	223
Jun.	1433	131	1476	79
Total		2171		1168
	Times 20%	2605	Times 20%	1402

Vintage High
(Control School)

Month	Enrollment 1975	Non-ill Absences	Enrollment 1976	Non-ill Absences
Feb.	1808	641	1819	515
Mar.	1791	720	1798	889
Apr.	1769	593	1774	648
May	1742	577	1747	684
Jun.	1716	129	1721	131
Total		2660		2867

Looking at the Spring of 1976 things changed; note that Vintage High stayed about the same in terms of non-ill absences and even grew slightly. Napa High had over one-thousand less non-ill absences in the Spring of 1976 than it did in the Spring of 1975. The treatment was administered (the new attendance policy) and there was a substantial affect to the population. The control groups continued on without any significant change. Napa High's non-ill absences were a little less than half of Vintage's. (This, again, is using a factor of adding 20% on to Napa's total to get the schools in total enrollment.) Non-ill absences were utilized from both schools for comparison

because this data was available from the district report. Ill absences were not available from Vintage High to make any comparison.

Goal five of this practicum was to increase the financial support for the district because of increase average Daily Attendance Support from the state at $6.00 per A.D.A. Again utilizing figure #3, the difference between the non-ill (these are absences the state will not fund) in 1975 and 1976 Spring semesters was 1003 students. At $6.00 per A.D.A. and a total of 1003 A.D.A. the monies generated for the Napa Valley Unified School District was $6,018.00. If one projected this data to a year, the total revenue gain would be over $12,000, for just Napa High School. If all the secondary schools utilized this attendance program, and assuming silimar kinds of success, the revenue gained for the district would be over $50,000.

Comparison of Weekly Attendance Report

The major goal of this practicum was to significantly reduce absenteeism at Napa High. Figure #3 shows data to indicate a 46% reduction in the non-ill category. What about the total picture? Did students come to school more after the implementation of the pilot attendance program? It was indicated in the needs assessment there were approximately 1000 students who could show improvement with the proper motivation. This certainly takes in more students than those who are labeled non-ill.

A week by week comparison using the spring semester of 1975 as the expost facto control is outlined in figure #4. The report is broken down into each of the eighteen weeks during the Spring semester of the 1975 and 1976 school year. During none of the eighteen weeks is there a higher absentee rate for 1976 than during the comparison

1975 semester. This is true in the non-ill as well as total absences area. The greatest differential occurs during the seventeenth week when figures show a 11.0% absentee rate in 1975 and a 4.7% absentee rate in 1976 for a difference of 6.3%. The lowest amount of difference occurs during the final week (this could be expected because another motivation is involved, that of taking the final) 1.7% during 1975 and .90% in 1976 for a small differential of .80%.

Figure #4

NAPA HIGH SCHOOL

Comparison Weekly Attendance Report

Month	Week	Year	Non-Ill Absences	Total Absences	Daily Average	Enrollment	Percent Absence
Feb.	1	1975	143	600	119.4	1523	7.8%
		1976	68	267	53.4	1553	3.4%
Feb.	2	1975	158	643	160.8	1523	10.6%
	(4 days)	1976	72	290	72.5	1553	4.7%
Feb.	3	1975	155	644	161.0	1523	10.6%
	(4 days)	1976	74	406	101.5	1553	6.5%
Feb.	4	1975	123	650	130.9	1513	8.7%
		1976	77	411	82.0	1544	5.3%
March	5	1975	198	631	126.1	1510	8.4%
		1976	84	451	90.2	1545	5.8%
March	6	1975	142	621	124.3	1507	8.2%
		1976	117	419	83.7	1524	5.5%
March	7	1975	119	537	108.3	1497	7.2%
		1976	87	328	65.5	1513	4.3%
March	8	1975	82	617	123.3	1483	8.3%
		1976	40	318	63.6	1508	4.2%
April	9	1975	108	575	115.0	1483	7.8%
		1976	49	323	64.6	1505	4.3%
April	10	1975	98	683	136.7	1483	9.2%
		1976	37	267	66.8	1505	4.4%
April	11	1975	158	557	111.4	1468	7.6%
		1976	94	359	71.8	1492	4.8%

Month	Week	Year	Non-Ill Absences	Total Absences	Daily Average	Enrollment	Percent Absence
April	12	1975	89	646	129.2	1464	8.8%
		1976	67	377	75.4	1493	5.1%
May	13	1975	126	686	137.2	1455	9.4%
		1976	58	367	73.5	1486	4.9%
May	14	1975	152	788	157.5	1448	10.9%
		1976	82	410	82.0	1481	5.5%
May	15	1975	118	591	118.3	1441	8.2%
		1976	46	349	69.7	1485	4.7%
May	16	1975	71	592	118.4	1435	8.3%
		1976	37	331	66.1	1477	4.5%
June	17	1975	127	631	157.8	1433	11.0%
(4 days)		1976	61	278	69.6	1475	4.7%
June	18	1975	4	124	24.8	1431	1.7%
		1976	18	63	12.6	1474	.90%
Totals		1975	2171	10816	124.3	1477	8.4%
		1976	1168	6014	69.1	1513	4.6%

A perusal of the percentage column quickly shows that the expost facto control group is usually in the upper seven to low nine percent bracket compared to the treated group which normally is in the upper four and low five percent area. The composite of all the data shows an 8.4% average for the control group. (Slightly less than the 9.1% which was determined during the needs assessment.) The data also indicates a 4.6% absentee rate for the students at Napa High during the spring semester, 1976, after the implementation of our new attendance policy. This again is attendance of 3.8% of the total student body, utilizing the total absences of 10,816 in 1975 spring semester and comparing that to the 6.014 absences during the treatment period. This means there were 44.4% less students missing classes in 1976 than 1975.

To even more graphically see the impact of the new attendance policy, please refer to figure #5. A graph is portraying the total absences the past four years during the spring semester. Please note there is little difference from year to year until the spring semester of 1976 after the implementation of our new attendance program. The average of the four previous semesters is an absentee rate of 8.75% compared to the computed 4.6% during this past semester.

Comparison of Total Full Days Students Absent

In the clarification of the attendance problem at Napa High section of the practicum, it was stated that a little more than one-third (611) of our student body stayed within the health guidelines. The other two-thirds (988) were absent more than five days, which indicates absenteeism caused by other reasons than health. A comparison of the data could help in understanding if this line of reasoning is valid.

Total Full Days Students Absent Spring Semester 1975 & 1976

Days Absent	0-5	6-7	8-12	13 or more
1975	622	135	262	501
1976	1263	109	113	66

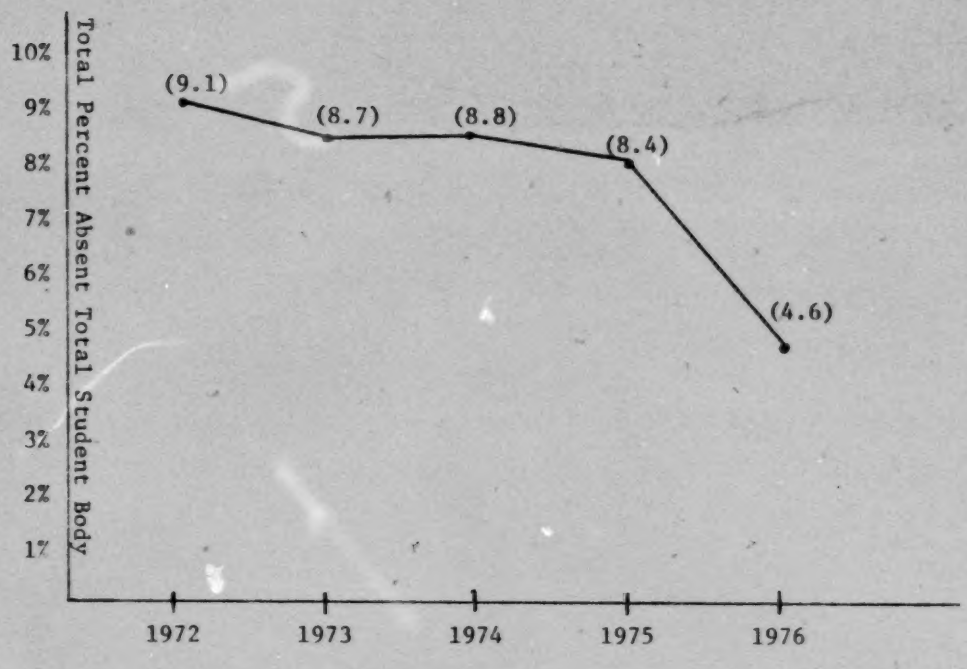
The figures show that 622 students in spring, 1975, had less than five days absent. This is 40.8% of the total student body. In 1976, 1263 students fell within the five day health standards set by H.E.W. Thus, 81.3% of the student body fell within the very favorable attendance zone.

In 1975, during the spring semester, 501 students missed more than thirteen full days of school, representing 32.4% of the student body. Only 66 students fell within this same dangerous zone in 1976.

Figure #5

NAPA HIGH ABSENCE REPORT

Spring Semester Past Five Years



4.2% of the student body missed more than twelve days after the implementing of the new policy. One could conclude from the data, that students who previously had severe attendance problems, changed their behavioral patterns to allow for better school attendance. The students who still have attendance difficulties need to be taken under further review. Many of the 66 students, who missed more than twelve days, were out of school because of extended illness (22 students). Thus, approximately 3% of the student population are out of school for questionable reasons. This handful of students will probably need other approaches beyond the "old" and the "new" attendance program to bring about better attendance.

Please refer to figure #6 to better show visually, via a bar graph, the comparison of the data on full day absences of the two semesters.

Attendance Policy Evaluation Surveys

One of the sub goals of this practicum was to increase the educational experiences of the students at Napa High, which will result in a greater amount of learning. (Please refer to goal II in the Goals and Objectives section of this practicum report.) Predictions were made that students would be in class more often to take advantage of learning opportunities. Statistical data now shows this to be true. But what about the objective stating---more subject matter will be covered in an average class because of a decrease in make-up and review time for absent students? How can this be measured?

On June 1, 1976, a survey was administered to the faculty at Napa High to have professional response in regard to this objective, as well as other important aspects of the attendance program. Please see figure #7 for the questions asked on this survey and the compo-

Figure #6

BAR GRAPH - FULL DAY ABSENCES

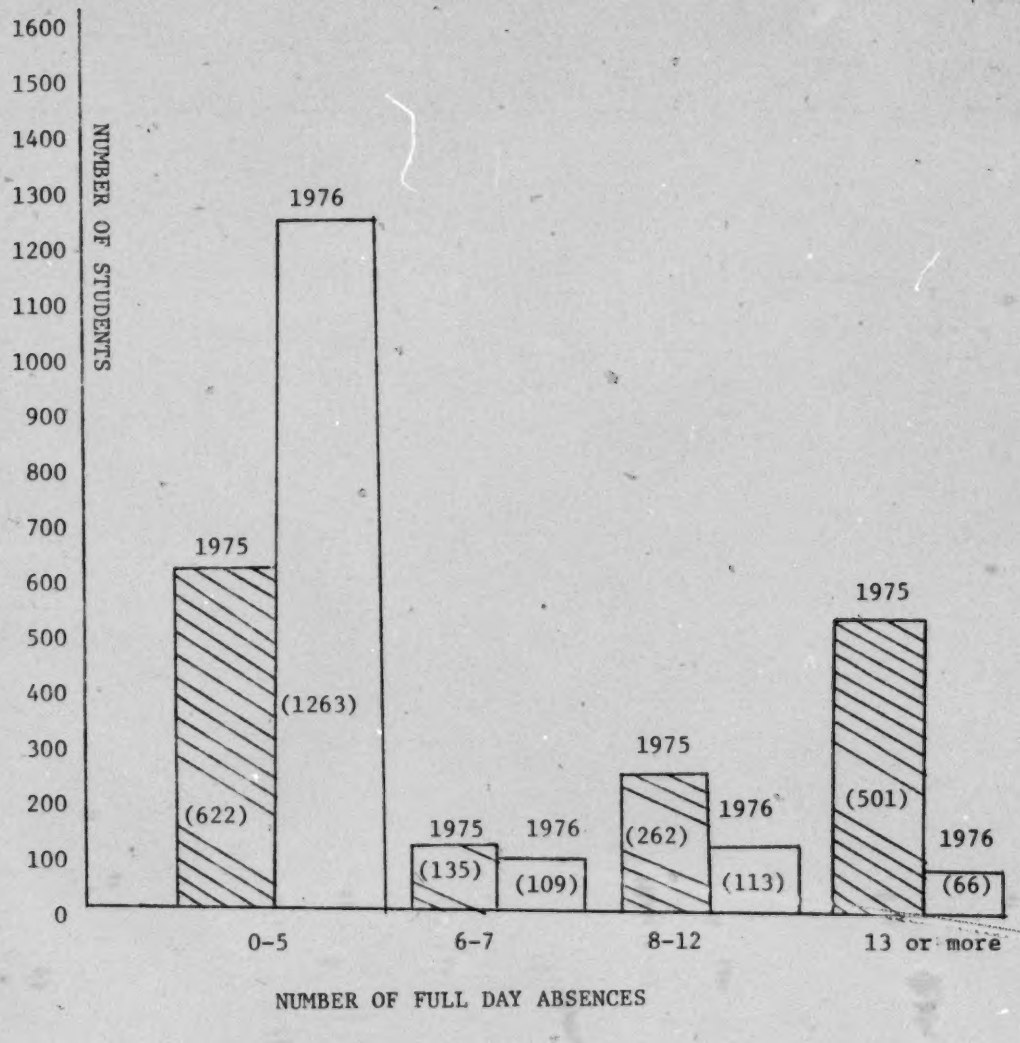


Figure #7

ATTENDANCE POLICY FACULTY EVALUATION SURVEY
(79 Faculty Responded)

ATTENDANCE - 1. In your classroom, do you feel that our present Attendance Policy is effective, over previous policy, based on this Spring semester experience?

Low 0----!----!----!----!----!High
1 2 3 4 5

30 - 5 5 - 3
29 - 4 1 - 2

COMPOSITE 4.4

LEARNING 2. How effective has the policy been in improving the students learning opportunities?

Low 0----!----!----!----!----!High
1 2 3 4 5

20 - 5 1 - 2
COMPOSITE 3.9 27 - 4 3 - 1
12 - 3

TEACHING 3. How effective has the policy been in improving your instructional program in the implementation of the course of study?

Low 0----!----!----!----!----!High
1 2 3 4 5

16 - 5 10 - 3 1 - 1 (-1)
COMPOSITE 3.7 28 - 4 4 - 2 3 - 0

ATTITUDE 4. Has the Policy been effective in changing students' attitudes toward responsible attendance?

Low 0----!----!----!----!----!High
1 2 3 4 5

20 - 5 2 - 2 4 - 0
COMPOSITE 3.8 28 - 4 1 - 1
7 - 3 1 - (-1)

COMMUNICATION 5. In your contacts to parents by phone, attendance form or report card, how effective has the communication been?

Low 0----!----!----!----!----!High
1 2 3 4 5

14 - 5 6 - 2 3 - 1
COMPOSITE 3.6 21 - 4 17 - 3

RECOMMENDATION 6. Recognizing that the new policy does take time for you to do the reporting on a regular planned basis, do you recommend we continue the pilot program the fall semester, with an evaluation at the end of the year for further consideration?

YES 75 NO 4

site score of 3.9 on question two and a composite score of 3.7 on question three indicates that more educational opportunities are taking place in a high percentage of the classrooms. This evaluation was done by the Napa High classroom teachers, who should be in a good position to professionally assess this important category.

Note that 75 out of 79 teachers, who returned their surveys, stated they would actively support the continuation of the new attendance program for the fall semester, 1976. The four who voted against the policy, tend to feel the results do not justify the work. A positive endorsement from 95% of our faculty is a strong statement, no matter what the concept might be.

Enclosed in appendix #4 is unedited comments that the faculty gave as input, in addition to the numerical data. Most of the comments center around the teachers' personal experiences they had in the classroom. The supportive comments are about in the same proportion as the statistical data.

On June 3, 1976, teachers, students and administrators who are members of the Napa High Attendance Committee administered a survey regarding the attendance policy to the parents. The survey was developed by the Practitioner to provide uniformity to all the calls made. The administrative office phones were utilized to call the parents. For every student who is in attendance at Napa High, there is a data processing card printed that has this essential data: name, address, telephone number, grade and subjects enrolled in At random, every third card was pulled to establish the homes that would be called. Random selection determined the five hundred households that our committee attempted to call and survey on that Thursday evening. Each committee member (12 total) was given survey

forms to fill out as the questions were asked over the phone. A total of two hours were utilized to contact the parents. Four hundred and twenty-five surveys were completed from the 500 households selected at random. There were no answer or no parents available at approximately 75 homes. The questions asked and the statistical responses are outlined in figure #8. A little over two-thirds of the parents surveyed knew the existence of the new attendance policy. A good deal of this knowledge probably stemmed from the fact that 56% of the parents had received communication from the school regarding their son's/daughter's attendance. Thus, they had first hand experience with the new attendance policy. As can be seen from the data, most of the households had received only one or two communications. This seems reasonable when one knows that nearly 90% of our students missed seven or less days of school and would have generated only one or two communicational situations.

On the important last question concerning the parents attitude toward the new attendance policy, almost two-thirds supported the concept. Those parents who did not favor the policy made up 18.6% of those surveyed. The data tends to indicate that in a group of five parents, three would favor the direction the attendance program is going, one parent would prefer it didn't exist and one would not be willing to make a decision.

Attached in appendix #5 is the unedited comments that were recorded by the committee members from the parents that volunteered them during the survey. Several parents appreciated the fact that the school let them know the state of their son's/daughter's attendance. There seems to be a general concern regarding the allowances made for illness. Many parents commented on this point, with most feeling no

Figure #8

NAPA HIGH ATTENDANCE POLICY
Parent Phone Survey
Thursday, June 3, 1976

Committee should ask the following questions in the order given:

1. Are you familiar with Napa High's Attendance Program?

   Yes 282 No 143

2. Did you receive any communication (verbal or written) regarding your son or daughter's attendance in school?

   Yes 238 No 183

   If answer to number two was yes, answer the following question:

3. How many communication contacts did you receive from Napa High?

   (1) 7 (2) 68 (3) 39 (4) 28 (5) 3 (6) 9

   (7) _____ (8) _____ (9) _____ (10) _____ More than 10 _____

4. Are you in favor of the present Attendance Program at Napa High?

   Yes 277 No 79 Undecided 69

Comments if parent made any.

(Please see appendix #5)

days should be counted for illness. To quote one parent, "There should be more allowances for sickness or doctor's appointments". As indicated in the data as well, many parents still were not totally aware of the new program as comments, "I really don't know much about it", were given. The comments certainly covered the complete parameters from positive to negative.

The last group that needed to be surveyed was the very important student body. Of any group this one certainly was the one to feel the greatest impact from the new attendance policy. A questionnaire was administered, via the first period teachers on June 4, 1976. Ample time was given to the students to complete the form and make comments. Over fourteen hundred questionnaires were returned. Using a random approach, one out of every three forms was pulled from the stack and the data totaled from these 475 questionnaires. The total results of this questionnaire are in figure #9. There are some discrepancies between what the students stated on the questionnaire and what was found in the actual attendance files. Utilizing the graph in figure #6, it is easy to see that approximately a third of the student population did have a better attendance. However, only 21% of the students stated they had improved their attendance and 12% stated they had attended less than before. Two-thirds of the students felt their attendance didn't change.

The students reaction to the second question on learning indicates that only 23% rated high (categories 4 & 5) the attendance policy as a factor in improving their learning opportunities. Conversely, 44% rated low (categories 1 & 2) the effect the attendance policy has had on the learning environment. There is somewhat of a difference of op-

Figure #9

NAPA VALLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Napa High School
June 4, 1976

To: Students - 1st Period Classes
From: Mr. Ron Feist, Assistant Principal
Subject: EVALUATION OF ATTENDANCE POLICY

Now that we have just about completed a semester with our new attendance policy, it is important that we evaluate its effectiveness.

Teachers, students, and parents are being asked its value to our school. We need to know how you feel about it. Please five the following questions your best and honest effort:

ATTENDANCE - 1. Compared to the previous year, did you attend your classes during this Spring semester

More Days 101 Fewer Days 55 About Same 316

LEARNING 2. How effective has the Attendance Policy been in improving your learning opportunities?

Low 0	1	2	3	4	5	High
	161	49	148	58	51	

EFFECTIVENESS 3. Do you feel the policy has hindered your education? If so, how?

YES 81 NO 386

COMMUNICATION 4. As a result of this policy, has there been more discussion on school attendance between you and your parents?

(A) More 113 Same 297 Less 56
(B) Your teachers: More 212 Same 207 Less 45

COMMENTS: (Please see appendix #6)

inion between the teachers and students regarding the learning climate. In figure #7, the teachers had quite strongly supported the concept of an improved learning situation because of the policy.

However, the students in greater numbers (83%) feel the policy has not hindered their education as expressed in question number three. Twenty-five percent of the students indicate in categories 4 & 5 of question four that the policy has been effective in changing their attitudes towards responsible attendance. Question five shows that 24% of the students increase communication regarding attendance with parents. Conversely, 12% of the students stated a decrease in communication. Comparing parts A & B of question five, results in a finding that the greatest communication increase took place between students and their teachers. Nearly 46% of the students increased their conversation regarding attendance with the staff with only a 10% decreased verbal involvement.

In appendix #6, is the unedited comments that were taken off the 472 tallied questionnaires. Approximately one out of every three students put down a comment on their questionnaire. There certainly was a wide diversity of comments. Just as with the faculty and parents, the students have supporters of the program and those on the other end of the spectrum. The statements in protest certainly outweigh the supportive ones. "It stinks", "change it back", "get rid of it", are the direct and common comments given. Maybe this student's comment of "I hate it, but I use it" tells the story. The student's aren't that pleased that a punitive motivator was used to get them to come to school, "it's too bad forcing kids to go to school; is this the only way students can be motivated to come to school?"

The student comment that is significant to this practitioner was, "I feel this is not the total solution. It's all right but not the answer. Find out the problem!" This will be, hopefully, the idea behind this next practicum. The new attendance program did motivate many of our students to go to school more regularly. But we certainly haven't solved all the problems. Especially some of the students' attitudes towards the school!

The Overall Evaluation

Much of the success of any practicum is judged by the degree of accomplishment of the major goals and objectives outlined. This practitioner would like to review in the overall evaluation, the success or failure of each goal and objective.

GOAL I - This general goal was to decrease significantly an average overall absence rate of 8.8% over the previous four spring semesters. A 4.6% rate this semester, indicates success beyond the hope of this practitioner.

GOAL I Objective A - Create a new attendance policy that is operational. As described in the practicum, the policy was developed and administered successfully. The document itself and the results generated measure this process objective's degree of success.

GOAL I Objective B - The increased communication between the student and parent as well as the student and teacher outlined in figure #9 indicates the need for the student to take on more responsibility. The student must be responsible to stay within the policy's guideline. The process objective was achieved with this exception. There were students who didn't want to take on this responsibility.

GOAL I Objective C - The policy created actually accomplished the process objective of making credits directly contingent on at-

tendance. Twenty-seven students lost their right to go to Napa High because of the policy. The policy works, but certainly it didn't contribute to the success of these students. However, hunderds of students were more successful in the classroom than they had ever been before.

GOAL I Objective D - It was determined that 501 students had severe attendance problems in the spring semester, 1975. This was reduced to 66 students in the spring semester, 1976. The populations aren't exactly the same the two different semesters. But, because of the consistent absentee rates the past four years, it can be stated with a comfortable degree of certainty that over 400 students are motivated to not have severe attendance problems. Figure #6 supplies the data. This product objective was accomplished with a high degree of success.

GOAL I Objective E - It is extremely difficult to determine the number of students whose attendance didn't improve. Sixty-six can be identified that are in the critical bracket of more than twelve days. The student survey indicated that 79% stated their attendance didn't improve. These are opinion statements. Statistical data in figure #6 indicates that at least 50% of the students improved attendance, and thus, not more than 50% could have not improved. This product objective met with good success.

GOAL I Objective F - The purpose of this terminal objective was to develop a more positive attitude of the target population toward good attendance practices. Even though attendance improved greatly by the policy, the student survey data shows 25% of the students attitudes towards attendance changed to a more positive responsible position. Moderate change 32% and 43% expressed that the new atten-

dance program had little to do with any attitudinal change. If the right 25% with severe attendance difficulties had made these attitudinal changes, this objective would be rated an overwhelming success. But this most likely is not the case. Attitudes were changed and this practitioner is very pleased to see a figure as high as 25%.

GOAL II - This general goal of increasing the educational experiences of the students was assessed by the faculty survey. As previously discussed, a composite score of 3.9 on question two and a score of 3.7 on question three indicates the successful obtainment of this goal. Faculty comments: "Being able to reach more students each day makes it much more ideal for good positive learning"; "Students are coming to class more often-continuity is not broken"; "Frustration of being hopelessly behind is minimized"; "In Algebra I more material has been covered. In Basic Math, students have completed more units" are testimonies to the success of the improved learning environment.

GOAL II Objective A - The data clearly shows that students have been in class more often to take advantage of learning opportunities. This process objective was obtained.

GOAL II Objective B - As outlined under the general GOAL II, the teachers have indicated a high correlation between the new attendance program and the increased subject matter covered. The following comments further illustrate: "More units per student have been completed this semester; "It is reassuring to know that most of the class will be there for exams and lab exercises;" "Course runs more smoothly, 2-3 weeks ahead of previous years". Based on teacher input, this terminal objective was obtained.

GOAL II Objective C - This process objective of exposing the tar-

get population students to the concept of being a dependable responsible citizen through our attendance program was accomplished via the policy. The student survey indicates a great increase in communication regarding attendance. The students were exposed to the necessity of good attendance.

GOAL III - Increase faculty morale through a consistently administered approach to the attendance problem certainly was accomplished. The faculty survey data states a strong support of a program that has solved a great deal of a problem that previously caused low morale in this area. When 95% (75 out of 79) of our staff believe in a program, morale has to improve. There are, however, teacher comments in appendix #4 that express concerns that still need to be dealt with. The program is far from perfect, but morale is certainly up.

GOAL III Objective A - Teachers served on the attendance committee from the very beginning. The needs assessment and policy determination were the work of this committee using the entire faculty as a sounding board. The teachers were the ones who implemented the policy in the classroom. The teachers survey was the formal opportunity for the teachers to evaluate the program. This process objective was completed successfully.

GOAL III Objective B - The policy itself fulfills a great deal of this product objective. As can be seen in the unedited teacher comments, the administration, in a few cases, needs to be always consistent in the management of the policy. There is also evidence in the teacher survey, that not all teachers are following the policy as consistently as they should.

GOAL III Objective C - The data clearly shows that students have been in class more. Logically, one can ascertain less lectures, films,

panels and discussions are missed. The teacher's survey data and comments would substantiate that frustrations are decreased in the staff, and this product goal met with fairly high success.

GOAL III Objective D - This terminal objective of improved spree de corp of the faculty is redundant. It is obvious by now that our staff (at least 95%) are very pleased with the success of our new attendance program. This practicum has done a great deal to pull our faculty together. They now know problems can be solved if we work hard and intelligently.

GOAL IV - One can probably always improve communication between the school and the parents. The goal was to increase communication over what we were doing. The parent survey data indicates that 66% of the parents were aware of the new attendance program. Nearly 57% of them had received communication from the school regarding their son/daughter's attendance in school. Communication certainly had increased, not only between school and parents but students and teachers as well.

GOAL IV Objective A - Communication regarding attendance was greatly increased and the process objective obtained. As can be seen in the comments section of the parent survey, much of the dialogue focuses around the need for children to be in school.

GOAL IV Objective B - This process objective was accomplished as the parent group had opportunities to act and react to the policy as it was in the design stages.

GOAL IV Objective C - The parent survey indicates 521 separate communications took place between the school and the home within the 421 parents surveyed. The 421 parents surveyed makes up only 27% of the parent population. Projecting the communicational experiences

to the entire population would give a total of 1929. Yes, communication did take place directly to the home of the students in the target population. An accomplished process goal.

GOAL IV Objective D - Throughout the practicum report, reference is made to the increased communication taking place. Each student that reached the dangerous point of twelve absences usually generated a parent, student, faculty conference. The logs of our dean's office show 118 in office conferences regarding attendance and several dozen more phone conferences. Opportunities for conferences were certainly available.

GOAL IV Objective E - Rapport is something that is always difficult to measure. The document that supplies the most data to measure this product objective is the parent survey. The subjective evaluation of the parental comments lead this practitioner to believe rapport has increased substantially. Most parents want to know how many days their offspring missed. This practicum increased communication. Increased positive communication will usually lead to stronger rapport. The objective data given in the survey shows that only 18.5% are against the new attendance policy. When only this small percentage of parents are against a program, you can feel quite sure your rapport is in pretty good shape.

GOAL V Objective A - The data clearly shows that non-ill absences have been reduced. The data from the weekly attendance report show a total of 2171 non-ill absences in the spring of 1975 and 1168 in 1976. This generates a differential of 1008 A.D.A. (Average Daily Attendance) units. Each unit is worth $6.00/day to our school district. The total additional monies generated were $6018.00. This terminal objective was obtained with greater success than anticipated.

A Description of the Institutionalizing of the Outcomes

This practicum was approved by the Napa Valley Unified School District Board of Trustees as a pilot program for Napa High for the spring semester, 1976. The board reserved the right to review the impact this new attendance program made upon the students, faculty, parents and community.

As outlined in this practicum report, the faculty at Napa High are very high on the success of the program. The parents are in favor of its continuation for the most part. It is also fair to say, the students are not all in love with the policy. But student morale is fairly good.

At the writing of this practicum report, the board hasn't met to discuss the plan to expand our attendance program to the other secondary schools. Until such time that the board can review the pilot program, Napa High will be allowed to continue with the program based on its success. The data generated in this report could be instrumental in giving the board more insight into the program. With another semester to polish our program, there should be very few problems unsolved, when it comes time to implement the attendance program into the remaining four secondary schools.

RESOURCES USED IN PRACTICUM

Materials & Budget

There were no additional facilities used beyond those that already existed at Napa High to do the practicum. There was a need to print a form letter to communicate with the home (see appendix #3) and make a data processing change to print the number of absences for each class on the report card. Below is the monies spent on materials to do the practicum.

*Attendance Form Letters	(printing cost)	$369.00
Data Processing Change		300.00
Postage for Form Letters		493.00
Miscellaneous paper & other supplies		50.00
Total monies spent on Practicum Implementation		$1212.00

*Only used approximately 60% of our forms. Thus, will have much smaller printing bill in the fall.

Human Resources Utilized

The Napa High Attendance Committee was the focal point around which this practicum revolved. This committee was made up of two administrators, six teachers, and four students.

Administrators:	Ron Feist, Assistant Principal Instruction, Chairperson
	Jim Rogers, Assistant Principal Guidance
Teachers:	Don Davis, Business
	Hanna Cassel, Foreign Language
	Pete Rivers, Physical Education
	Gary VanScyoc, Industrial Arts
	George Rusch, Social Studies
	Margaret Laughlin, Mathematics
Students:	Brent Bird, A.S.B. President
	Wendy Simmons, School Board Liason
	Chris Hodgkins, Political Involvement
	Leslie Erickson, Forum Member

This committee met as a group nine times to write and rewrite policy. Meetings were approximately 1 1/2 hours long. Committee members were utilized in the research process; presentations to faculty, parent and student groups; survey and questionnaire develop-

ment, and tabluating questionnaire data. Below is an outline of people power hours utilized in practicum:

- Practitioner & total committee meetings (12 people) 1 1/2 hours each meeting	162 hr.
- Research of other schools' methods, practitioner and two other committee members four hours each	12 hr.
- Napa High faculty reviewing policy rough draft with practitioner and committee 91 people one hour	91 hr.
- Committee meeting with P.T.A. (200 members) one hour	212 hr.
- Practitioner & two student committee members met with 85 student leaders of the Napa High Legislative Body (Forum) 45 minutes.	66 hr.
- Practitioner and three committee members met with three district office administrators 1 1/2 hours	11 hr.
- Practitioner and entire committee met with school board (seven people) and superintendent one hour	20 hr.
- Practitioner, adminstrators (four) and counselors (four) discussed implementation format one hour	9 hr.
- Practitioner, all committee members, administrators and counselors design attendance form letter 1 1/2 hours	30 hr.
- Practitioner develops letter to parents	2 hr.
- Practitioner and three faculty committee members develop faculty and parent questionnaire two hour	8 hr.
- Practitioner and four student committee members develop student questionnaire one hour	5 hr.
- Clerical time to produce three questionnaires	9 hr.
- Committee phoning parents for survey	18 hr.
- Faculty completing survey 20 minutes	30 hr.
- Students doing questionnaire 15 minutes	388 hr.
- Compiling parent, faculty and student data practitioner, committee members and secretaries	505 hr.
- Get data from attendance files practitioner and secretary	25 hr.
Total People Power Hours	*1153 hr.

*This figure doesn't include: The extra time that counselors spent in working with their counselees who had attendance problems; the two deans' time in working with students and parents regarding attendance; the attendance secretary who had to put the form letters in the envelopes and make sure they are mailed; the teachers filling out form letters or discussing attendance problems with students. No additional staff members were added because of the new attendance program, thus, no new cost for labor. Subjective input from the staff indicates they worked harder implementing the new attendance program than they had under the old system. More staff time was

spent on attendance to the betterment of the educational climate in the school. It seems that most of the staff didn't take the time away from other educational activities, but simply put in more time to handle the additional work load brought forth by the new attendance policy.

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this practicum was to improve the attendance of many of the students at Napa High. The path chosen to follow was the development of an attendance policy by a faculty and student committee that would place more responsibility for attendance on the student and parents. A direct effect of increased attendance would be an improved learning environment and students would be in class more often to take advantage of learning opportunities. This in turn would lower teacher frustrations because not as many students would be missing classroom work - lectures, films, panels, and class discussions - which are difficult to make up.

How successful was this practicum? That is the question this practitioner would like to discuss in conclusion. The evaluation section of this report attempts to cover each major undertaking, goal and objective of this practicum and give it some label or degree of success. This certainly will not be duplicated but only pulled together into a general conclusion.

The data clearly shows that the students of Napa High improved their attendance. When in a semesters time a school can drop from a historical 8.8% absentee average to an outstanding 4.6% rate, this is success. The decrease in the non-ill from 1.9% to 0.9% to generate over $6,000 is also good. But this practitioner feels the most important gain in the practicum is the obtained togetherness that the faculty demonstrated in working on our attendance problem. Getting 95% of our staff to agree on a concept is togetherness of the highest degree. Especially in light of the increased work that the staff was subjected to. Attendance at Napa High became an important

word. Communication was not only taking place between teachers and parents (many for the first time) but between teachers and students as well. The policy certainly had a tremendous impact on our school, it's students, faculty and parents. But the policy, in reality, is only a two page piece of paper with guidelines and mandates written on it. A great deal of the success of this practicum has to be attributed to this simple fact. Communication regarding attendance was increased greatly. A student who missed any large amount of class time was receiving concerned communication from his/her classroom teacher, the attendance secretary, the counselors, the administrators and parents. The student couldn't even look at his/her nine week report card without attendance figures staring back. Motivation took place for students to be in class through the conversations of the adult world around them. For those students who didn't listen to the recommendations of the school community, the policy was always there to determine their fate.

This practitioner knew over 500 students had missed twelve or more days in previous semesters. Nervous time was in order when the attendance committee had negotiated the figure 12 after meeting with the educational community. This indicated over 500 students could be in serious trouble after implementation of the new policy. This practicum wouldn't have been much of a success in any form or fashion if it caused 500 students to be dropped out of a student body of 1553. Student motivation had to take place when only 66 students failed to get themselves into the safe zone. This fact has got to be one of the most amazing things of the practicum.

Nearly 87% of this critical target population had to have made a behavioral change. Of the remaining 66 students, 27 were transferred

to continuation school and lost their right to attend Napa High. Out of a student body of 1553, 1.7% were put into a situation where they had to try a different educational opportunity (continuation high school), but more came to the surface then just these 27 students.

Nearly 18% of the parents stated they wouldn't support the new attendance policy. These concerns have to be looked at. Four faculty members went on record as being against the policy. This statement expressed part of these four peoples feelings: "It's a pretty pathetic admission of failure when teachers are obliged to stoop to administer a constant, dull blanket of coercion and threat to accomplish what thoughtful, considerate and imaginative effort should provide."

The policy is considered by some to be punitive. It sets limits and explains the consequences if you don't stay within the parameters. But don't speed limits laws do just about the same thing? This is a motivational type policy. Not all motivation is going to be sugar candy. Most psychologists would agree that people do things for mainly two reasons:

(1) They have a definite need to fill what can be accomplished by doing a certain thing.

(2) Action will prevent them from losing something dear they hold already.

This practicum certainly uses the latter as its motivational base. Attendance did increase, and, according to the professional teaching staff, so did the learning opportunities.

Any recommendations this practitioner can give will center around decreasing the punitive nature of the policy. Overall, the practicum was successful. All stated goals and objectives in the proposal were obtained with a good degree of satisfaction. But there

now exists in our school community a few teachers, some parents and many students who dislike the policy. Even though many students who dislike it have increased their attendance greatly. If this dislike by part of the educational community is not dealt with, the future of the program could be hurt. One faculty member is getting close when he states, "This attendance policy does nothing to deal with the real issue of school reform or to seek out the causes for student dissatisfaction, student apathy, students' general displeasure with the routine of education." This practicum certainly got more students to attend school and provided them with more educational opportunities. It didn't solve some of the students dislike for school, problem. But this was not this practicum's purpose. This practitioner is planning (Nova Practicum Department is aware) to pick up on this problem and develop a two year practicum on this theme. Work on the needs assessment has already started in that regard.

A mechanical recommendation to improve this practicum, is to develop a computer program format that will allow the teacher to deal with data processing cards. The teacher would turn in the data processing cards on those students absent each day. The computer in turn will fill out the form letter to be sent home at the appropriate time as well as automatically putting the days absent on the report card. This computer based system is under investigation at the prestnt time. This practitioner recommends that any school wishing to implement this attendance program give serious thought to utilizing the computer. It could save a great deal of clerical time.

A second recommendation is to take a look at the possibility of

using a franking stamp to mail out the routine letters. Utilizing this system, the form letters could be sent to the home for under three cents a piece. This would be a great savings over the current thirteen cents 1st class postage. The postmaster in the school's community could explain the system's opportunities and limitation. Napa High will be implementing the use of the franking stamp in the fall of 1976.

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Appendix #1

COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE AND TRUANCY - STATE OF CALIFORNIA

1. California law requires that each person at least 6 years of age but under 18 shall attend compulsory full-time education or compulsory continuation education unless graduated from high school or exempted for reasons of (a) physical or mental condition or (b) attendance at a private full-time day school or for 3 hours per day under a credentialed tutor.

2. Full-time means about $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours for primary grades and about 6 hours for others. For State apportionment purposes the minimum day is 3 hours for kindergarten, 3 hours and 50 minutes for grades 1-3, and 4 hours for all others. Continuation education (for certain students of age 16 or 17) is 3 hours minimum day, but a student who is regularly employed is required to attend only 4 hours per week until he is 18 years old.

3. A pupil shall be admitted to the first grade if he is at least 5 years and 9 months old on September 1 of the current year. The age for kindergarten is 4 years and 9 months. It is optional for the child to attend but the district is required to maintain kindergarten classes, except where there are 9 or less applicants and the State Board of Education approves.

4. Any pupil subject to compulsory full-time or continuation education who is absent from school or tardy more than 30 minutes without valid excuse on more that three days is a truant and shall be reported to the attendance supervisor or superintendent. Each time thereafter requires a report and on the third the pupil is deemed an habitual truant. Any peace officer or school officer shall arrest an habitual truant, bring him before the county probation officer and also report to school authorities. The juvenile court may render judgement that the parent shall deliver the pupil to school under $200 bond forfeitable to the district, and under such a plan may suspend any judgement against the pupil. Each county superintendent shall report statistics annually on the above to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

5. The attendance supervisor (clerk of the board) shall file a criminal complaint against any parent who violates these laws. Any parent having control of any truant, unless excused or exempted, is guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to a maximum of $25 fine or 5 days in jail, with $250 and 25 days for each subsequent conviction. In some areas of the State these procedures are administered in a very lax fashion.

Appendix #2

NAPA VALLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
NAPA HIGH SCHOOL

Dear Parents and Students:

The Napa High faculty and student body are busy preparing for fall semester final exams which start next week. At the conclusion of finals we will be embarking upon the spring semester starting February 2. One of the major programs that will be implemented at the start of the second semester is a new attendance policy. This policy has carefully been devloped by a committee of faculty and students utilizing imput from the faculty, P.T.A. and student leaders.

Throughout the country, student absenteeism is a serious problem for secondary schools, Napa High certainly is no exception, Even though our average of 9% per day absent rate is far from the worst in the Bay Area, we certainly have room for improvement. The purpose of the new policy is to generate an improvement by communicating the need for good attendance at our school.

Napa High has determined that a school cannot teach pupils who are not present. the entire process of education requires a regular continuity of instruction, classroom participation, learning experience and study in order to reach the goal of maximum educational benefits for each individual younster. The new attendance program is designed to aide the school in working with the student and the home in a positive consistent way. Everyone in the educational community stands to gain by improved student attendance. I would encourage the parents to take the time to read the new attendance policy as outlined below and discuss it with your son or daughter. This policy was constructed to aid students in their educational persuits and not as a pumitive measure. Any chronic illness and other valid extenuating circumstances will be considered in extending the limit of allowable absences, to keep in this theme.

At any time my office, the deans or your son or daughter's teacher or counselor can be of any help in regard to this new policy please don't hestitate to call.

Ron Feist
Chairman Attendance Committee

NAPA HIGH NEW ATTENDANCE POLICY:

1. This policy designates twelve (12) days absence per semester as maximum allowed for normal circumstances of regular school attendance. The twelve (12) days of absence are to accommodate:

   a. Personal illness
   b. Professional apprintments that could not be scheduled outside the regular school day.
   c. Serious personal or family problems

Thirteen or more absences during a semester can jeopardize a student's enrollment status.

2. After the fourth (4), eighth (8) and twelfth (12) absences from any class period, the teacher of that class will complete a form indicating the dates of student absences. This form will be mailed home by the attendance office and copies issued to appropriate staff members. The student shall be counseled by the teacher at the fourth (4) absence. The teacher and counselor/administrator shall counsel the student following the eighth(8) and twelfth (12) absences. A personal school contact will be made with the parent immediately following the eighth (8) day of absence. The parent will be encouraged to initiate a conference with the teacher to clarify absenteeism and any questions which may be raised. Chronic illness and other extenuating circumstances will be considered in extending the limit of allowed absences

3. With the accumulation of thirteen (13) absences during the semester for any class period, the student risks forfeiture of course credit in that class and can be dropped from class enrollment. Parents will be notified.

4. A review by the Napa High School Attendance Review Board (NHSARB) consisting of representation from administration, counseling and faculty may be requested by the student, teacher, parent or counselor to examine the specific conditions relating to the individual case any time prior to dropping from class. the NHSARB may extend the absence limit, continue the student's enrollment in the class (es) on a probationary basis or take such action as is indicated. The parent will be promptly informed in writing of the results of such hearing.

5. School-sponsored or sanctioned activities for which the student has been properly pre-excused are exempted from, and will not pertain to this policy.

6. Disciplinary suspension days will be included in the total days absent.

7. Tardiness is defined as any unexcused appearance of a student beyond the scheduled time that a class begins. Three (3) incidents of unexcused tardies to a class will be considered as equal to one (1) absence. Tardiness of 20 minutes or more to a class may, at the descretion of the teacher, be considered an absence. The teacher shall notify the student when such incidents are recorded as absences.

8. Students must maintain a minimum enrollment in four courses to continue as a regular student; one study hall permitted. Students' enrollment shall be dropped when the minimum of four classes is not maintained.

9. It is extremely important that students realize that the twelve (12) days of absences built into the attendance policy are not to be considered as authorized days for absences but for illness and emergencies.

10. A School Attendance Advisory Committee consisting of administration, faculty, and students will periodically evaluate this policy in an effort to maintain guidelines that reflect the school's educational philosophy and contribute to the welfare of the students.

Appendix #3

2577

NAPA VALLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

NAPA HIGH SCHOOL
2475 JEFFERSON STREET
NAPA, CALIFORNIA 94558

TOM D. FOTINOS
Principal

DATE_____

DEAR PARENTS

The purpose of this letter is to provide parents and students with timely information about attendance records in the following class. Your child

_____ Grade_____ was absent from his/her_____ period number _____

class on the following days _____

We believe that maximum educational achievement occurs for students through regular attendance in classes, while excess or absence results in below average achievement and possibly even failure.

After accumulating thirteen absences from any one class, the student may not receive credit for that course, or a may be dropped from that course.

PLEASE REFER TO COMPLETE ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR FURTHER DETAILS AND CLARIFICATION.

Please contact your child's counselor regarding absences, academic progress, and attendance policy. Appointments can be arranged by calling the Counseling Office, 252-5316.

Very truly yours,

_____
Teacher, Napa High School

PARENT CONTACTED BY TEACHER ☐
COUNSELOR ☐
OTHER ☐

COMMENTS

_____

_____

COPIES: WHITE - PARENTS
CANARY - COUNSELOR
PINK - OFFICE
GOLDENROD - RETURNED TO TEACHER

THIS IS THE ____ FIRST NOTICE
(Absences)
____ SECOND NOTICE
(Absences
Cumulative
Continuing
accumulation)
____ THIRD NOTICE
(Excessive
Absences)
____ FOURTH NOTICE
(Letter
required)

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Appendix #4

NAPA HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY
(Faculty Comments)

The policy has workes very well judging by the past semester. Student reaction in my experience has been good, and the parents seem to be in favor of the policy, too. Hopefully, the bookkeeping will be computerized in the future.

I still had many tardies but from now on will announce at the start of class that I count three as an absence. Nine tardies and a student is out of class, is this correct?

Better, because they are in class and don't miss explanation of assignments, etc.

I can depend, for the most part, on students being there and do not have to waste time re-explaining individually.

On absences yes, tardies no.

The parents I talked to appreciated it.

The previous policy was no policy!

If students are not in class, they cannot be taught.

less review is needed.

I think it has taken students some time to learn that the policy would be followed. The next semester should show more improvement, I believe.

Even for reluctant learners, being exposed everyday to classroom instruction, routine, and activities has had an effect.

A great amount of classroom time is saved in not having to repeat for returned absentees daily and also in not having to assign so much make-up work for the student who was absent one or two days a week formerly.

Students seem to be concerned now about absences, especially absences that concern appointments (doctors, dentist, etc.) This policy has made them far more aware (the majority) of lack of attendance being a fault that has a cure.

In calling parents, I find I reach perhaps one in every three, and some parents, I feel, are still covering for students who might be in school. However, many parents are grateful and have even taken assignments over the phone.

Appendix #4 (cont')
(Faculty comments)

Students take this procedure very seriously. The improved attendance in calss cuts down on make-up work. It's an excellent idea - realized.

Some students come more regularly now due to new policy. However, some students could care less, and their attendance shows it.

Those students that come more often because of new policy, do learn more because they are in calss more and do not miss the needed information or work to keep up with the course.

being able to "reach" more students each day makes it much more ideal for good, positive learning.

A slightly higher than average ratio of students seem to have a more positive attitude. Maybe they are just afraid of being suspended or have their parents find out about all their absences.

Almost 100% of all parents contacted by me responded favorably to my call. Most agree this should have been done "long ago".

I don't mind, at all, calling parents as long as they will do "their part" to improve their child's attendance.

I feel the parents, as well as the student, should be appraised of the attendance habits of the student. Many parents don't even know their children'a attendance habits.

I feel that we are far ahead of "Vintage". I have five of their students in Period One, and their attendance is erratic, and rarely properly excused.

I have liked the contact with the parents, but not the extra paper work.

Attendance is Foreign Language classes is always quite good. In Communications 10, there was some improvement.

Have not made any contact.

It would help is the roll book had space for weekly attendance tallies by absences and by tardies.

At peak periods, I fall behind in tallying. With the roll being collected on an hourly basis, perhaps we could use a computer to keep track in the attendance office. I think the contacts with parents is valuable and my classes have improved since the new attendance policy became effective.

Only three to four students hwe cared less, others aware of need to attend regularly.

Too easy for students to get clearance from attendance office. (Please take into account my limited experience with these matters.)

Appendix #4 (cont')
(Faculty comments)

Naturally improved with higher attendance, particularly in the "manipulative" field. You cannot learn to run a machine by reading about it.

Less make-up work results.

Please qualify these answers with my limited experience as a substitute teacher. Mr. Goldberg has his own opinions and longer experience along these lines.

It works if students are well informed about the policy.

Most students care, there's always a few that will try to get around any system!

Some (very few) resent being bothered, most are concerned enough to act on the information.

I'd like to see a different type of form with numbers, etc., to save time in writing all the dates in.

Quicker action should be taken in removing a student, who has a total of 13 absences, from a class.

Basic math avsences have averaged only 2-3 per day per period. Last year, absences wer 8-10- per period per day.

Students are coming to class more often - continuity is not broken. Frustration of being "hopelessly behind" is minimized.

Students are keeping rack of their absences.

To help in implementation of this new policy, more help should be sought.

All absences should be included or counted as an absence. Pass to field trip, student forum, etc., or taken out $\frac{1}{2}$ an absence. Example: I have a 5th period student who spends most of her time in nurse's office, student forum, pass from here, there, everywhere and consequently spends very little of her time in class.

Some students should be dropped earlier (i.e., I have a student w/25 + ab.)

Attendance in my Basic Math Sections up 100%. No absences during finals which was always heavy in the past.

Less class time spent on roll taking, etc., so more class time for helping students.

In Algerbra I, more material has been covered. In Basic Math, students have completed more units.

Appendix #4 (cont')
(Faculty comments)

Difficult to catch at home at same time that I have time to contact them. All contacts made were positive though.

More efficient way of obtaining phone numbers needed. Report on 4,8, 11, and 13 days.

This is my first year and connot compare with previous high school experience.

When they are in class they can be learning.

It is reassuring to know that most of the class will be there for exams and Lab exercises.

Many have made a decision about what is important class and credit or absenteeism.

Excellent response from parents. They seem glad to have us helping them with attendance.

Let's make a real effort to use the Data Processing program to follow up this start.

As tim e goes on, further imprvement in attendance will be noticed. Belive this is a bery good school policy.

It has certainly cut down on the number of absences in my classes.

The problem I have is keeping up with the absences and then getting notices sent out.

This is not a complete solution, but is a positive step.

Less interference each day with 'catching up" students who were absent on where the class is.

Course runs more smoothly, 2-3 weeks ahead of previous years.

Had trouble finding parents.

Sure would appreciate the computer setup.

Had positive results. Only negative results ere where parents felt that they were being put on the spot or did not understand the program.

I do not mind making out these forms since they take the place of otherwise progress reports. I don't think that I have had anymore drops mabe even less to Continuation School.

I think things will smooth out this second semester when the kids realize that the school means business and will make this system work. How about those teachers who don't keep roll of kids?

Appendix #4 (cont')
(Faculty comments)

The first step in learning any subject is for one to attend on a re-ular basis not to do so is like trying to understand a book by reading only certain pages.

We still need to cut down on students missing class (pass, etc.). These students are not counted as absent, but their grade is affected.

Not known although I think most are accepting the system even though they still gripe about it.

Most seem glad to hear from me. Contacts are very ahrd to make because many parents are working.

I.B.M. cards would help so we could run this through a computer.

non-ill absences have been cut way down. I had no students absent for hunting or caddying at the Kaiser and only two absent on trips with their parents.

It is impossible for absent students to make-up what is learned during the class period through class discussion.

As students became aware of the policy, they began checking their attendance themselves.

I found difficulty in finding parents at home.

Is there someway through data processing that absences can be recorded so we don't have to repeat the days of absences each time?

Yes, if by effective, one means, an increase in the count of bodies in their seats. No, if it neant to insure increased school success by students who otherwise would not be doing well.

The opportunities should be there irregardless of the attendance policy

The students attendance has not insured his willingness to exert intellectual effort. The attendane policy has made it legal acceptable to eliminate "unsuccessful" or "undesirable" students.

No, the use of fear or threat as a techniques for increasing attendance does not change attitudes. In the long run, it may create new more negative attitudes.

Parents have objected to the inclusion of illness in the drop procedure.

Not until we really determine the real causes of absences and try to deal with them. I do not like the traditional threat approach to solving the issue.

Except for first period, although I don't know, whether it isn't just one of those bad classes.

Appendix #4 (cont')
(Faculty comments)

This attendance policy does nothing to deal with the real issue of school reform or to seek out the causes for student dissatisfaction, student apathy, students' general displeasure with the routine of education.

There has been less need for repetition and thus less boredom for better students except first period.

Unfortunately, one seldom reaches the parents and there is not enough time to try over and over again.

The certainty of immediate parental knowledge of cuts and absences has had a startling effect in Basic Math classes. Quite often had 50% absences last year. Maximum is 25% this year.

More units per student have been completed this semester.

Instruction is one-to-one in Basic Math and far less time (or none) for individual help with 32 students present. Last year, many students profited by increased chance for individual instruction when only 16 or 18 were present.

Do not believe that an increased sense of responsibility can be instilled by this simple change. However, constant attendance can be habit forming

Suggest that teacher keep copy so that he has immediate check on what has been sent in the next day. Usually, if sick, the same student will be involved. This system will obivate putting unsightly scrawls in attendance book. The Sent report is never decipherable on this copy anyhow.

This applies chiefly to Basic Math classes as attendance has never been a problem in Geomentry or Algebra classes.

In Basic Math, the Geometry and Algebra attitude of students toward attendance has been excellent.

Parents have been most cooperative and eager to have their sons and daughters attend regularly and do well.

And try to find a procedure which is equally effective and less time consuming. I have been able to do this in keeping attendance tardy record summaries in roll book.

Improved attendance has created some class control problems in Basic Math. This has been more than offset by the number of units (credits) completed per student compared to previous years.

Attendance has been extremely good in my classes this semester. Whether all of this can be attributed to the attendance policy, I do not know. However, I suspect that at least a part of it is due to this policy.

Appendix #4 (cont')
(Faculty comments)

Difficult to measure but is seems reasonable to assume a student has an opportunity to learn more if he attends school regularly.

I do not think attendance is related to the quality of instructional program presented. Good attendance merely allows more students to avail themselves of this opportunity for learning.

Not all of them but is has encouraged some to become more responsible.

This "policy" should be a permissable practice at the individual teacher's option. Any teacher who is convinced that his/her learning environment is enhanced by these means should also have the strength of his/her convictions to promote it individually instead of hiding in the anonymity of the enforced conformity of the entire teaching faculty.

Whatever success is attributed to this attendance "policy" serves as rather clear evidence that there is a deficiency in those activities and practices which should be significaent in the lives of the students. I believe that this "policy" treats the symptom rather than the cause per indifferent attitudes toward attendance. In my judgement, the cause is mediocrity and insensitivity in curriculum development and implementation.

It's a pretty pathetic admission of failure when teachers are obliged to stoop to administer a constant, dull blanket of coercion and threat to accomplish what thoughtful, considerate and imaginative effort should provide.

It is the "get tough policy" that is reulting in the slightly better attendance. Therefore, hire a couple of "para professionals" with the savings of $6,000. You could probably get two for that price or a part-time basis and compound the investment. The Para progessionals could keep a log on absenteeism and make phone contacts more often.

It has been a detractor, requiring much more clerical time.

Some students monitor absences so that they can stay in the "safety zone".

Some of the contacts that I made were good. Often, after several tries, I wasn't able to make contact. I need a phone in my room and more clerical time.

Inconsistencies exist. Some students are dropped 12 absences +1 while othere are permitted 25-30 absences. One student was even permitted back to class after being detained in Juvenile Hall for weeks. When this policy was instituted, it was understood that twelve absences + one would reult in a drop from class.

I've noted no change this semester.

Appendix #4 (cont')
(Faculty comments)

The main effect has been to add on a new task to occupy time.

One parent seemed pleased to be informed. I felt the policy intimidating.

I agree, one semester is not a fair test time.

I feel the 12/13 day warner clause is unnecessary.

I feel the money saved should go to the payment of teachers for the added time spent. X = $6,000/ # sections taught by total faculty then each teacher gets (X) (sections he/she teaches)

Perhaps we could revise the policy so we could let the parents know at six absences, cut out tardy policy.

Have roll sheets included print out of phone numbers.

Good at the beginning then laps. At beginning people responed more. Students are nery negative toward it now.

I see no help here. In fact, I found or feel it has impeding learning by having a lot of people in class who don't want to be there. Again I see no help because more time is spent in discipline and probational problems.

Too early to tell. Students seem to think it is just a way of getting more money not concern for them.

There has been some more here; but generally these same parents still don't care about their children.

It has taken too much of the time I generally use for class prep or conversing with students.

If we could take the clerical work out of it, it would be a lot better.

Definitely, I have decided to implant a similar program on the same basis for all my students; Jr. Highs and Vintage High since they have nothing so effective as our attendance policy.

Cadets felt they were forced by the policy to attend class and try to participate in our activities and think less of cutting as in the past. In general, the attitudes and attention of each student has been much easier to hold.

Less repeating duty assignments to cadets missing class which used to take at least one day per week for review for those who missed.

Considering that we also loch the gate behind the last cadet to enter the compound where we do our training, they haven't much choice but to get to class.

Appendix #4 (cont')
(Faculty comments)

Most parents I've contacted take immediate action to try and correct their cadets problem and I generally hear from the cadet the next day during class as to what was discussed with their parents.

I do believe the whole district should adapt the pilot program. Since I have Jr. Highs in the program and Vintage, I must follow suit in the procedures Napa High cadets are subjected to. I make many phone calls, but very few referrals having only two periods and 92 cadets.

I have no classroom, as a counselor, but in talking to individual students who in the past have tended not to come to class on a regular basis, I discover many are now attending classes.

Attendance has improved.

Prep time has been infringed upon because of added hours of constantly counting absence for 250 girls.

If their presence is a measure of attitude.

Tenth Grade class has been much better.

Can't comment because of lack of knowledge over old policy.

Do not send one out on both 12th and 13th absence.

Would like to know hwat reasons were given on extensions (why students got them).

For some reason, some of the slips aren't reaching home.

Absences did run in the 30 and 40 as a high, now 14 to 20. Great!

Teams have enough in attendance everyday to participate fully.

If P.E. with larger classes can do it, the majority of the faculty shouldn't complain.

Policy on extensions needs to be elaborated. I feel that students on vacation do not deserve extensions unless students non-ill (business, etc.) also get extensions.

In situations where a student has reached and exceeded his 13 absentees and still continues to be absent from your class as many as 30 or 40 days and is on campus attending other classes, I belive our policy needs something to take care of a situation like this. In P.E. we cannot drop the student from class.

Allowances should be made for students to makeup time missed when certain circumstances and an honest effort by the student is present.

Appendix #4 (cont')
(Faculty comments)

I have practically no low achieving, unmotivated students this year. I see no significant change in the attendance of the students in my calsses.

I have no waste time in the detailed attendance accounting, hence there has been some compromise in what I was able to do for my classes in laboratory activities.

If the student is in his seat he may or may not learn. If the student is not in his seat (absent) he will not learn.

A few students have not learned responsibility yet or they did not believe policy. Many who have been dropped are now belivers.

High approval from parents. Often heard comment, "absent time".

The best change we have made in a long time.

Effective in keeping people in classroom.

Learning, to me, is not equivalent to seat time.

It has been effective in taking time away from makeup work; but has also taken time to keep up attendance.

Students in class have made some kind of agreement to play by the rules - attitudes remain the same.

Most parents happy to have information - some quite defensive.

None observed in talking with work experience students. I have noticed concern over number of absences.

Appendix #5

NAPA HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY
(Parent Comments)

Yes, because the parents were never called.

The parent should be contacted after 5 absences.

I'm in favor of any system that keeps the kids in school and prevents cutting.

Excused absences should not be penalized.

She was happy to be notified.

The students who are sick should not be penalized, but the ones who cut should be.

It's working!

It is important to know if the student has been missing classes.

It is hard to educate students if they aren't in school.

Basically, an excellent policy.

Had a hard time contacting Mr. Rogers to extend time.

Don't always get them, son intercepts the mail.

Now that I understand it (allowance made for illness), I'm all for it.

Yes, very good.

Yes, unnecessary to get notices of excused absences.

Wife who is not home is familiar with it.

Much happier with it. This year we know when he's cutting. Last year we did not.

She doesn't think it's right, not fair to students.

Not carried out by each teacher uniformly! She got one after 10 absences, not before. Makes a lot of extra work for teachers.

Not good at all. Not fair to students. Thinks it should be like Vintage High.

Likes it, parents of kids who cut are informed.

Thinks it's a good idea after I told her about it.

Appendix #5 (cont')
(Parent Comments)

Student not absent.

A lot of kids want to cut, this prevents it.

If the kids are cutting class, it's fine, but if a kid is ill, she thinks it's dumb. She was told the student must have a doctor's excuse for the sons absence.

Very good. Talked with counselor and was told in addition it saved money.

It has certainly cut down on the absences.

Fine in some respects and in others there should be allowances.

Really don't know but in a way it's good.

Think it is good.

Need student at home at times.

Yes on illness. No on tardies.

Doctor's appointments should not be included in the number of days absent.

A step in the right direction.

Out ill a lot.

Just heard about it today.

It's a little disturbing.

It's great. Should have started it years ago.

Don't know much about it.

There should be more allowances for sickness or doctor's appointments.

Agrees there should be exceptions for "legit" excuses.

Too many days grace. It's a good way to keep the parents aware of their children's attendance.

Don't think it's very effective.

Illness should not count.

Seems OK but don't know too much about it.

Very good program.

Appendix #5 (cont')
(Parent Comments)

Very good idea.

I hate it.

My daughter has been in and out of the hospital a lot and they've been trying to kick her out of school.

I haven't really been bothered by it. I think it's fine.

Doesn't care anything about it.

Good for students who cut class. They pick her out because she was sick.

Not fair if your're sick.

Psycology is good behind it. Hasn't helped so much in their case, because they write notes for absences.

Not fair if person is sick - they shouldn't be dropped.

In favor if students who are ill aren't cut.

Like the idea of the parents knowing.

If you're 18, it doesn't make any difference.

Liked old one better - shouldn't punish student.

I guess I wasn't familiar with it.

Not uniform. If good for 1, good for all.

Shouldn't drop for unavoidable absences.

It will take time for parents and students to adjust, but it is a good thing.

I am very much in favor.

Likes to know how many days student misses.

Called office to notify them that their children wouldn't be there and teachers weren't informed so she received letters anyway.

Likes to know how many days student misses.

Feels that parents should be contacted directly, not by means of a letter or by student.

They let them have to many absences.

Appendix #5 (cont')
(Parent Comments)

I don't like it because it doesn't give the kids a chance.

The parents knowing is good.

I think it's assinine.

There is not contact between school and parents.

She thought it was from the punishment point of view and that it should be from the reward point of view.

Isn't aware of the program.

Likes to be kept aware.

No problem with daughter so it doesn't matter.

Very favorable.

Probably good and always glad to learn if anything comes up.

Think it is beautiful.

Good deal.

Think it is fine.

Think it is great.

Son was seriously hurt. He was penalized, She likes it, but thinks it should just be accepted when it is a doctor's excuse without going before a review board.

It is favorable but feels that it should be begun in elementary school.

Has no problems with daughter but if she had she would be most appreciative.

Very much in favor.

Want definitely to continue.

Although not familiar, was in favor when explained.

Son has good attendance, Father also teaches. Is in favor of such a program.

Very much in favor. Thinks before this, parents were unaware of what their children's attendance was.

I really don't like it but they have to do something.

I really don't know much about it.

Appendix #6

NAPA HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY
(Student Comments)

A good idea if you give more of a sick days.

If it's signed by your parents it shouldn't count as an absent.

It makes it harder to cut class. Sometimes you have a personal reason for cutting and you get in trouble for it, making it worse.

I don't like this policy because kids are worried about their absences and don't watch their work.

School shouldn't be mandatory because if students want to learn they will. Should be able to come when you want, but I like it.

No effect at all.

It stinks!

Good idea, makes people come more often.

Change it back!

If you're sick, your absence shouldn't count.

I feel this is not the total solution. It's alright but not the answer. Find out the problem.

We should be responsible enough to realize we should go to class. We shouldn't feel pressured.

If it has to continue it should be better explained to parents. Absences can be counseling appointments, sports, trips, assemblies, not necessary cuts.

Get rid of it!

Being absent shouldn't affect your grade.

Additional money will help the school.

Some teachers don't care, some are strict about it.

I have attended more this year, cut 2 months last year, but too tight.

System is dumb, people will come if they want and won't if they don't.

Policy should be dropped.

Appendix #6 (cont')
(Student Comments)

Hasn't affected me because I don't miss that much school.

I guess it's OK, don't like it at all.

I hate it, but I use it.

I think you should change the rule that 3 tardys are an absent.

Get rid of the stinking thing.

Keeps a lot of my friends at school.

Too many people flunk just because they work or they are sick.

By the time I got my first notice, I had 7 absences, some teachers don't care.

Like my grandfather was dying and I took my school work and you would go see you grandfather if he was.

Be OK if we were allowed a few more days.

We should be allowed 15 or 16 days of absence.

The attendance policy if effective to students, and maybe to some it would help them to attend more. I think it's a good policy.

I think it is a good policy. Even though it has not helped my grades or attendance. I feel it is good to drop the kids who want to pass a class by just doing the least that they can.

I think all you want is the money.

Instead of trying to force us to come to school make us want to come to school.

I think it's doing good because it keeps more kids in school.

I think it is stupid!! To be kicked out of school for absences is dumb. It's the person's responsibility if he wants good grades or not.

I don't like the idea.

More people are being dropped out of school and that's not right. I think it stinks.

It made a lot of work for the teachers and that all.

The person responsible for this policy should be penalized.

It puts bad relationships between teachers and me that were friends last year.

Appendix #6 (cont')
(Student Comments)

I would go either way.

A good policy, some flaws like the tardy rule. Detention a useless form of discipline.

I feel you should drop the whole thing.

Do away with it; if a student doesn't want to come to school, OK, its his/her fault.

I don't feel that is helps you in anyway as far as you learning more. I don't feel that the school is thinking about you learning.

The notices don't help a thing. Kids get home before the parents and dispose of them.

Should waver your absence if really sick.

Keep up the good work - Steve Austin.

I don't like it because we are being treated like 2 year olds.

This policy just makes the students who cut a lot count more.

The teacher's always writing out slips, my parents hate them also.

Make classes more interesting.

Reminder of 12 absences to student only.

Policy stinks.

When a person reaches the age to be in high school they should be responsible enough for themselves in school. So it has no advantage for the majority of the students, if anything, it's a disadvantage.

I think you should leave it as it is. If we get more money the better off we are. It makes us more aware of how much we need to keep people here.

I like the policy.

I like the policy but I can't speak for anyone else.

It should be fifteen days.

Go back to last year's policy.

Go back to the old way.

Appendix #6 (cont')
(Student Comments)

As an independent and undercover group, the Napa High student task force has more important subjects at hand.

Kick out about 200 more people and school will be better off.

Attendance policy is too lenient. 12 days would have to be an epidemic situation.

Papers that are sent out are a waste of money. My mother could care less how many times I cut P.E. and sending all of the slips stating their absences uses up funda that I'm sure could be put to better uses.

Get rid of it.

There are cases where the counselors and teachers feel that a student is improving when a student is dropped after 12 absences.

I think they should extend the days of absence.

You should change back to the old attendance policy, the more students you loose the less money you get, since you're griping about money so much.

Go back to the old way of the attendance policy.

Go back to the old way the attendance policy is so stupid it makes you not want to go to classes as much. You're more independent with the old way.

If you have a parent (in person) request to be out of school on vacation then it should not count against your 12 absences and if I didn't graduate next January I would be dropped out of school, because we might go for 3 weeks.

I think it allows me to cut more because I can cut 3 days close to the end of the semester if I haven't missed any before.

It doesn't effect me because I don't cut enough and I'm not sick.

This policy doesn't even seem reasonable to the ones that get sick easy. It is hard on the head.

Do away with it! I feel that if people are going to do it anyway. I don't like it. It's strange. When you tell people that they can't do something 9 times out of 10, they'll do it out of spite. How many people were dropped out of their important classes because of this policy? People are going to get ulcers.

Trash it!

I feel that all green and white slips should be discontinued.

Appendix #6 (cont')
(Student Comments)

I feel it's a good way of systemizing, but my parents, (Plus alot of others) get on my case whenever one of the first notices come home and I was sick for 4 days. Notices shouldn't go home until there are 8 absences because people tend to get sick once in a while. Don't penalize everybody for a small handful of juvenile hass rejects who like to cut.

Causes hassels at home. Parents explode when written on report cards.

Completely abolished, the school district money otherwise, than by forcing intimidating tactics upon students.

Has not affected me, I think it's a good idea.

I HATE it!

Good policy but is shortening the number of student and the money for the teachers.

I think its good for the student.

Feels the 13 day policy makes students feel like convicts. Likes the smoking areas and no gym in 12th grade. Thinks cutting is a dare to the school because students write their own notes. 13 day policy compells untrusting feelings.

The facts speak for themselves! The policy is working and should be continued.

I hate it but I use it!

An attendance policy is needed, but not this one. More student involvement should be sought in the formation of something like this.

What if you are actually sick, for instance: my friend has a terrible illness and has been absent for more than a week! Do you still lower her grade?

I feel this policy should be used for truancy problems, but is very inconvenient for the student if he or she is sick for a long period of time.

Lessen it to eight days a semester.

You are heavily wasted stoner!!

It's not fair to the kids who have an illness that causes them to be absent more than the limited amount of days.

shouldn't be enforced as much as it is.

Appendix #6 (cont')
(Student Comments)

Get rid of it.

I think the attendance policy stinks. If somebody wants to cut everyday and flunk, that's their problem. The only reason the school wants it is because they will do anything for money.

It didn't hurt me any but if you're really sick then why come to school to spread germs.

Students really don't care it's the parents who get all freaked. The kids get pressure from both sides at home and school. We need a break.

It should be up to the students how many days he wants to be absent. Napa is the only one who has it. Why?

I don't like it.

Quit pushing!

I don't think we should have it.

It's not fair to the students who have good grades.

I don't think it has helped me any compared to my past years.

I guess it's good for you guys, but no matter what, there's always a way we students can get around stuff like this and we will.

It's too bad forcing kids to go to school is the only way students can be motivated to come to school.

Give us a break.

This is a free country so it is my opinion that you are interfering with my right to learn as I please. I know you think you are trying to do good to me, just butt out!

There should be more understanding as to the attendance when a person has an illness, dental appointment other restrictions.

I think it is a good policy.

It is a facist attempt to force "kids" to go to classes they don't wish to attend.